

IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF VAN WERT COUNTY, OHIO

COURT OF COMMON PLEAS

2020 APR 29 AM 10:02

CIADY HOLLEBACH, CLERK
VAN WERT CO. OHIO

In the Matter of: ALTERNATIVE PROTOCOLS FOR OPERATION OF AND MAINTAINING SERVICES OF THE VAN WERT COUNTY COURT OF COMMON PLEAS, GENERAL DIVISION IN RESPONSE TO OHIO'S PLAN TO RE-OPEN ECONOMY DURING THE STAY-AT-HOME ORDER AND MASS GATHERING BAN OF MORE THAN 10 PEOPLE DURING COVID19 PANDEMIC

JOURNAL ENTRY

In response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, while the stay-at-home order and mass gathering ban of more than ten people remains in place and in light of Governor Mike DeWine's April 27, 2020, announcement of the State's plan to re-open part of the economy in Ohio beginning May 1, 2020, the Van Wert County Court of Common Pleas, while continuing to seek to protect the public, including vulnerable persons, and the court staff, including vulnerable persons, and maintain essential court functions, hereby gives notice of its intent to keep in full force and effect the alternative protocols set forth in its entries issued March 19, March 23, March 25, March 31, April 1, and April 3, 2020, and to adopt the following requirements which the court staff will follow while undertaking the responsibilities of their positions in person and in the Van Wert County Courthouse and outside thereof, as well as governing the conduct of persons, including vulnerable persons who personally appear for court business in the courthouse:

1. All staff will wear face coverings during personal contact with and while in the presence of any member of the public.
2. All persons who personally appear, including attorneys, shall wear face coverings while on the third floor outside the offices of the court, in the courtroom, and in the court offices.
3. All persons, staff, and those doing business with the court shall, while in the presence of one another, maintain physical distance from others of at least six feet, as practicable.
4. As much as possible, persons having business with the court who intend to personally appear shall telephone the court at (419) 238-6935, or in the alternative, the Probation Department of the court at (419) 238-2825, to schedule an appointed time at which they intend to appear.
5. In accordance with the State's mass gathering ban of more than ten people, gathering of more than ten people anywhere on the third floor of the Van Wert County Courthouse is prohibited, those spaces including the lobby, the courtroom, the probation department, court offices, and meeting rooms.
6. All persons entering courtroom may be subject to temperature checks. Any person over 100.4 may be excluded from courtroom.
7. COURTROOM ETIQUETTE
 - a. Please remain in your seating area

b. Only approach the Bailiff or the Bench after requesting permission and being granted leave to approach

c. Please assist the Bailiff and Sheriff's Deputies by instructing your clients and others to only move through the Courtroom after being granted leave.

d. Do not bring your clients/Defendants into the Courtroom without getting clearance from Deputy or Bailiff.

e. Exhibits – Use hand sanitizer on podium to clean your hands before picking up your exhibit. Place the exhibit on the podium for the Bailiff to retrieve

f. Video conferencing – As many hearings as possible will be conducted by video conferencing. If an attorney needs to speak to his client, the courtroom will be cleared to allow private conferencing. The camera will be pointed to attorney's seat at table. Attorney will signal to courtroom cameras when finished.

g. Non-prosecutors should not be around the prosecutor's table. No milling about the courtroom.

h. Attorneys and their staffs will not be permitted in the court office areas. All such persons shall remain in the Courtroom proper.

i. No person shall be in front of the counsel tables in the courtroom at any time.

8. Each individual staff member shall continue to be responsible for maintaining their offices and workstations by disinfecting their desks and work stations as well as high contact surfaces prior to commencement of work operations, at the close of work operations, and intermittently throughout the work operations, specifically including using appropriate disinfectant to clean desks, workstations, and high contact services, upon a person leaving the work areas and before another person enters the work area.

9. Staff members shall assist one another in maintaining all office equipment to see that it is disinfected throughout the workday.

The court restates its belief that during this public health emergency, it is necessary to maintain services to our citizens and provide them continuing access to justice through our court. The court will entertain any reasonable requests for accommodations for staff and any member of the public to that end on a case-by-case basis. The court will continue to address the public crisis with the idea of maintaining services by undertaking that responsibility without losing sight of treating people with kindness, courteousness, and respect, so that our court may provide a fair and just result to all parties whose conflicts the court addresses.

IT IS SO ORDERED



Judge Martin Burchfield